

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

MC-02 EB-11 COME-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 RSR-01 /127 W

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R 061345Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2948

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR UG

SUBJECT: AMIN COMMEMORATES ECONOMIC WAR, ANNOUNCES
RESUMPTION OF TOURISM

REF: KAMPALA 2481

1. AT TORORO AUGUST 4 IN SPEECH MARKING FIRST ANNIVERSARY
LAUNCHING OF ECONOMIC WAR (I.E. EXPULSION OF NON-CITIZEN ASIANS),
PRES AMIN ANNOUNCED THAT BAN ON TOURISM WOULD BE LIFTED SEPT. 17
(FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF INVASION FROM TANZANIA).

2. SPEECH CONTAINED LITTLE ELSE OF SIGNIFICANCE. STATED HE
UNDERSTANDS HMG HAS DECIDED TO HOLD UP ARMS SALES TO UGANDA,
BUT THERE ARE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES WHO WILL ASSIST COUNTRY. HE
HASTENED TO POINT OUT HE WOULD RATHER USE MONEY TO BUY TRACTORS
AND FERTILIZERS ANYWAY, ALTHOUGH UGANDA'S ARMY HAS TO BE
STRENGTHENED FOR SAKE OF PEACE AND INTERNAL STABILITY. ON
EXPULSION OF ASIANS, HE DECLARED THAT GOD ASKED HIM TO TRANSFER
COUNTRY'S ECONOMY INTO HANDS OF UGANDANS ONE YEAR AGO IN
TORORO, WHEREUPON HE DISCLOSED THIS TO SOLDIERS THERE. SAID
MANY PEOPLE DOUBTED HE WOULD IMPLEMENT ORDER, BUT DESPITE
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MANY THREATS BY PROPAGANDISTS HE DID INDEED KEEP HIS WORD,

AS HE ALWAYS DOES. ALSO REITERATED THAT HE NO LONGER AGAINST ANY OTHER COUNTRY, INCLUDING UK (BUT DID NOT ADD U.S. THIS TIME).

3. MOMENT GEN AMIN ARRIVED FROM KAMPALA AND STEPPED FROM HELICOPTER, SKIES OPENED UP AND IT POURED FOR NEXT THREE HOURS. (HE STATED IT WAS BLESSING FROM GOD.) AS USUAL, HE UNFLINCHINGLY INSPECTED TROOPS, WATCHED SCHOOL CHILDREN, CO-OP MEMBERS, ETC., MARCH BY AND DELIVERED SPEECH. PERHAPS DOWNPOUR ACCOUNTED, HOWEVER, FOR HIS RELATIVELY SHORT ADDRESS, LACK OF MUCH RESPONSE FROM CROWD, AND HIS RETURN TO KAMPALA IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PROCEEDINGS. INSTEAD OF READING, AS EXPECTED, HIS LENGTHY MESSAGE SENT TO OTTAWA COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE, PRES SIMPLY SUGGESTED THAT HIS LISTENERS SEE WHAT HE HAD TO SAY IN FULL IN VOICE OF UGANDA (REPORTED SEPTTEL).

4. COMMENT: REOPENING COUNTRY TO TOURISTS COMES AS NO SURPRISE, AS PRES HAS BEEN SAYING FOR MONTHS THAT HE WOULD TAKE SUCH ACTION "SOON." IT WAS NEVER ALTOGETHER CLEAR JUST WHY HE BANNED TOURISM LAST NOVEMBER. VARIOUS REASONS GIVEN HAVE INCLUDED NEED TO TIGHTEN INTERNAL SECURITY AND DESIRE TO UGANDANIZE TRANSPORT AND BOOKING FACILITIES TO PREVENT KENYA FROM DRAINING OFF TOURISM REVENUES EARNED IN UGANDA. (SMALL TOURIST BUSES WHICH CARRIED VISITORS TO GAME PARKS WERE MOSTLY LICENSED IN KENYA AND PRACTICALLY ALL FOREIGNERS BOOKED THEIR WHOLE EAST AFRICAN TRIP THROUGH KENYAN TRAVEL AGENCIES.) LIFTING BAN ON TOURISTS, THOUGH, IS ONE THING; AT WHAT RATE THEY WILL RETURN HERE IS ANOTHER. ON ONE HAND, INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION HAS STABILIZED SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR AND WITH EXCEPTION OF SOME UNDP PERSONNEL, THERE HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY NO REPORTS OF ANY EUROPEANS OR AMERICANS BEING PHYSICALLY MOLESTED BY UGANDAN SECURITY FORCES, DESPITE AMIN'S PERIODIC VOCIFEROUS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN FOREIGNERS IN COUNTRY. IF AMIN INDEED HAS EMBARKED ON NEW COURSE AND CURTAILS HIGHLY INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS HE PREVIOUSLY PRONE TO MAKING, IT WILL OF COURSE BE AN IMPROVEMENT AND WILL GREATLY HELP THE SITUATION. IN TORORO SPEECH HE CALLED ON ALL UGANDANS TO RECEIVE TOURISTS CORDIALLY AND TO "SHOW THEM TRUE UGANDAN HOSPITALITY AND THAT WE ARE PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE." OTHER SIDE OF COIN IS THAT EVERYONE HERE CONTINUES TO BE FEARFUL OF ARMY AND IS ALL TOO AWARE AMIN'S PAST UNPREDICTABLE BEHAVIOR. FURTHER, ALTHOUGH IN PAST WE HAVE FOUND TOURISTS GENERALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNKNOWNING AND DISINTERESTED N DOMESTIC SITUATION, THEY MAY COME IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH A FEW ECONOMIC REALITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, OF LATE THERE HAVE BEEN SERIOUS INTERMITTENT WATER SHORTAGES IN CERTAIN AREAS OF KAMPALA (INCLUDING THIS EMBASSY AND UPPER FLOORS OF KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL), AS WELL AS SERIOUS SHORTAGES OF SUGAR, SALT AND CERTAIN OTHER FOODSTUFFS. PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM, THOUGH, IS TRANSPORT. NEW VEHICLES ARE NOT BEING IMPORTED AND OLD ONES BELONGING TO ASIANS HAVE LONG SINCE BEEN "ALLOCATED"

TO THE MILITARY. SPARE PARTS ARE IN EXTREMELY SHORT SUPPLY,
AS ARE GOOD UGANDAN MECHANICS. FINALLY, COMPETENCE OF MINISTRY
OF TOURISM IN PUTTING WHOLE WORKS TOGETHER IS AT BEST QUESTION-
ABLE. IN SHORT, IT HARD TO ENVISION FOREIGN-BASED TRAVEL
AGENCIES QUICKLY PUTTING UGANDA BACK ON THEIR EAST AFRICAN
MAPS. TOURISTS ARE LIKELY TO RETURN HERE ONLY SLOWLY AND IT WILL
BE QUITE SOME WHILE BEFORE PREVIOUS ANNUAL RATE OF 12,000
AMERICANS IS REACHED. IF STABILITY OF INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION
IS MAINTAINED, IF GEN AMIN CONTINUES TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN
HIS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, MESSAGES AND ACTIONS, AND IF TRANSPORT
AND ACCOMMODATION HURDLES CAN BE OVERCOME, THERE NO REASON
TOURISM HERE SHOULD NOT EVENTUALLY BOOM. ATTRACTIONS IN UGANDA--
ESPECIALLY GAME PARKS, LUSH COUNTRYSIDE AND FRIENDLINESS OF THE
PEOPLE--ARE EXCELLENT AND SOME FEATURES (SOURCE OF WHITE NILE,
NILE RIVER LAUNCH TRIP UP TO KABALEGA--NEE MUCHISON--FALLS) ARE
UNIQUE. UNFORTUNATELY, WHILE UGANDA'S ECONOMY--TOURISM AND
OTHERWISE--HAS ALWAYS OFFERED TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL, REALIZING
THAT POTENTIAL HAS BEEN ANOTHER MATTER. VURROWS

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